

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1336

ANSWERED ON:27.10.2008

PUBLIC TELEPHONES UNDER BHARAT NIRMAN PROGRAMME

Masood Shri Rasheed;Verma Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has formulated any policy for providing Public Telephones in villages in the country under Bharat Nirman Programme.
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether private telephone companies are not ready to provide telephone facilities in the rural areas;
- (d) whether the Government is evolving any action plan to persuade private telephone companies for providing telephones in the villages;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA)

(a) & (b) Under Bharat Nirman Programme, Government has formulated a Policy to provide to public telephones in all villages having populations more than 100 but excluding those lying in thick forest areas/ naxallite affected areas with subsidy support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). For this purpose, USOF has entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in November, 2004 to provide 66,822 Village Public Telephones

(VPTs). Out of these, BSNL has provided 55,081 VPTs as on 31st August, 2008.

(c) to (f) As per present policy of Unified Access Service Licences (UASL), there is no roll out obligation for Private Basic Operators (PBSOs) to provide telephones in rural areas. However, USO Fund is being extensively deployed for providing subsidy support to increase the penetration of telecom services in rural areas. Apart from BSNL, PBSOs are also participating in various schemes for provision of telecom facilities in rural areas under subsidy support of USOF through bidding process.